

# STATE

state.gov/statemag  
January 2018

# MAGAZINE

AAFSW honors exceptional  
volunteers for worldwide service

Cultural ambassadors share  
message of tolerance in Indonesia



FACT training prepares personnel  
for high-threat postings



Tap Headlines To Navigate

## Features

### Crash! Bang!

FACT training prepares personnel for high-threat postings  
*By Isaac D. Pacheco*

### Unity in Diversity

Cultural ambassadors share message of tolerance in Indonesia  
*By Tashina Cooper*

### Post of the Month: Baghdad

Mission Iraq promotes economic opportunities  
*By Erik J. Schnotala*

### Giving Back

AAFSW honors exceptional volunteers for worldwide service  
*By Joanna Athanasopoulos Owen*

### Mentoring at State

Developing the leaders of tomorrow  
*By Adam Sotomayor*

### Last Waltz

FSO's band performs final concert in Lithuania  
*By John McDonald*

## Columns

In the News

Diversity Notes

Appointments

In Brief

Retirements

Lying in State

End State



### On the cover

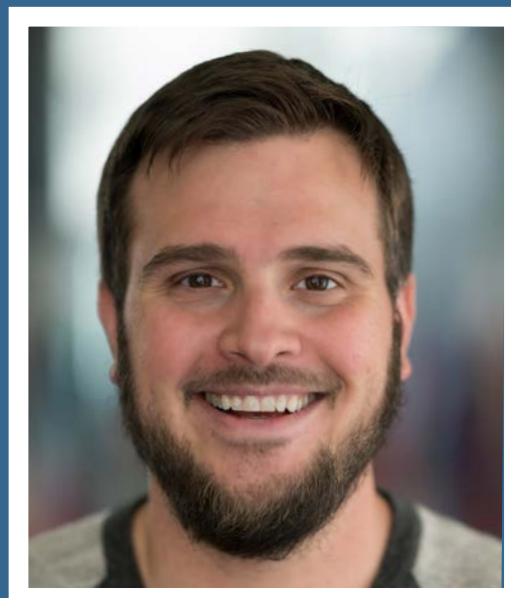
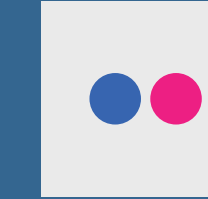
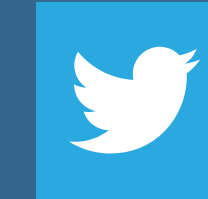
A FACT instructor looks on as a participant rams a vehicle during the driving skills portion of the course.

*Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco*



Native American cultural ambassadors and members of the Kalimantan Dayak share their histories through dance, music, and storytelling at @america.  
*Photo courtesy of U.S. Embassy Jakarta*





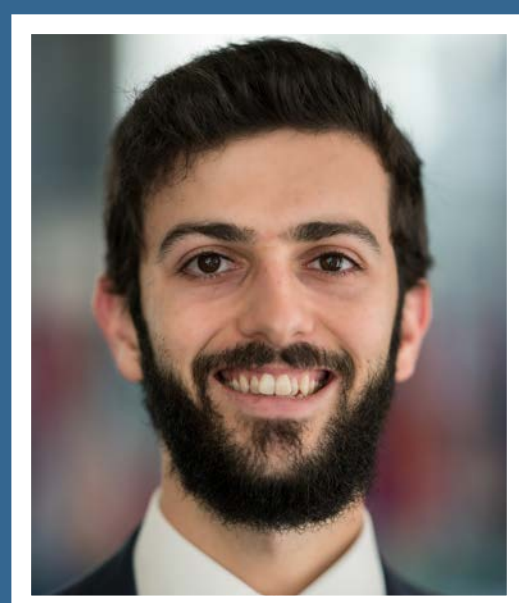
**Isaac D. Pacheco**  
**Editor-in-Chief**  
pachecoi2@state.gov



**Ed Warner**  
**Deputy Editor**  
warneres@state.gov



**Luis A. Jimenez, Jr.**  
**Art Director**  
jimenezla@state.gov



**Zach Abels**  
**Associate Editor**  
abelszm@state.gov



**David-Kevin T. Bryant**  
**Associate Editor**  
bryantdt@state.gov

## State Magazine

For details on submitting articles to *State Magazine*, request guidelines by email at [statemagazine@state.gov](mailto:statemagazine@state.gov) or download them from [state.gov/statemag](http://state.gov/statemag).

2401 E Street NW, Room H232  
Washington DC 20037  
[statemagazine@state.gov](mailto:statemagazine@state.gov)

*State Magazine* does not purchase freelance material.

## Deadlines

The submission deadline for the **March issue is January 20.**  
The deadline for the **April issue is February 20.**

*State Magazine* is published monthly, except bimonthly in July and August, by the Bureau of Human Resources at the U.S. Department of State. It is intended for information only and is not authority for official action. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of State. The editorial team reserves the right to select and edit all materials for publication.

## Editorial Contributions

Unsolicited artwork and manuscripts are not accepted, and publisher assumes no responsibility for return or safety of unsolicited artwork, photographs, or manuscripts. Query letters may be addressed to the deputy editor or [statemagazine@state.gov](mailto:statemagazine@state.gov)

Post of the Month maps are produced by the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues

**Office of the Inspector General Hotline:**  
**1-800-409-9926** [oig.state.gov/hotline](http://oig.state.gov/hotline)

# STATE

MAGAZINE





Consul General Jim Mullinax of the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu lights a candle during his tour of Wenshu Monastery, a prominent Chengdu-based Buddhist monastery built during the Tang Dynasty. The monastery holds 500 paintings and works of calligraphy from the Tang and Song dynasties. During the tour, Mullinax met with representative sites of the Chinese government's five officially recognized religions in Chengdu.

*Photo by Yani Zeng*

## Consulate General Promotes Religious Freedom

The China section of the Department of State's annual International Religious Freedom Report often notes reports of deaths, in detention and otherwise, of religious adherents, as well as arrests, torture and harassment of members of religious groups for activities related to their beliefs and practices. Against this backdrop, the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu, China, organized a religious freedom program for Consul General Jim Mullinax.

Between late October and mid-November, Mullinax commemorated International Day of Religious Freedom and International Day of Tolerance by touring prominent religious sites in Chengdu and engaging with local faith leaders. He visited one representative site for each of the Chinese government's five officially recognized religions and met with locals who attend the Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim and Daoist places of worship. The public affairs section publicized his visit on social media, along with a message highlighting religious freedom as a fundamental American value and emphasizing the importance of tolerance and religious diversity in building a healthy and vibrant society.

Mullinax complemented his tour with private engagements with religious leaders in southwest China who are not affiliated with the government's sanctioned organizations, including some who have endured detention and harassment at the hands of the Chinese government for their religious beliefs and practices. They thanked Mullinax for the U.S. government's engagement and close monitoring of China's repressive environment and told him of their concerns and the challenges that unregistered groups face in organizing or even participating in low-key activities related to their religions. Mullinax reassured these faith leaders of America's unwavering support for religious freedom and of its continued support for the advancement of human rights in China. ■





U.S. Ambassador Carolyn P. Alsup (second from left) and Public Affairs Officer Janel Heird engage one of the teacher coordinators of Banjul Scholars Club, Alhagie Jallow, on the role of teachers in promoting high education standards in Gambian schools during a roundtable on Nov. 16, 2017, at American Corner Banjul.

*Photo by PD Staff*

## Embassy Launches Scholars Club

The U.S. Embassy in Banjul celebrated International Education Week by launching the Banjul Scholars Club, a competitive program that brought together 30 top high school students for an education roundtable with Ambassador Carolyn P. Alsup and public diplomacy staff. The club joins the six other clubs in rural communities that comprise the mission's EducationUSA Competitive College Club network, which offers educational advising, skills training, mentorship and tutoring to the best and brightest students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ambassador Alsup told attendees the embassy wants to assist “The Gambia’s best and brightest students in developing key critical thinking and writing skills, engaging with the community, preparing for university admissions and researching university options.” Teacher coordinators from five participating high schools spoke about their challenges in raising educational standards in The Gambia, which suffers from a 45 percent illiteracy rate and where poor families can’t afford textbooks. Despite the school systems’ chronic lack of funding for textbooks and other learning materials, students still seek to learn and continue on to higher education. Mariama Sanyang, a student from Nusrat Senior Secondary School, said that she and her friends sometimes spend all night at school or come to the school at 2:00 or even 3:00 in the morning. “We all want to be first in our class,” she explained.

Motivated students represent hope for the future of The Gambia, which less than one year ago turned away from authoritarianism and voted in a democratic government. The Banjul Scholars Club is just one of Embassy Banjul’s efforts to bolster the capacity of Gambian youth to build a bright future for their country. ■





"Media users should always question the news, and media professionals should never rely on one source," Kevin Smith told the audience in American Center in Addis Ababa.

*Photo by Fitsum Seyoum*

## Embassy Promotes Media Literacy

During a three-day media literacy program initiated by the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Kevin Smith, a U.S. media expert sponsored by the Bureau of International Information Programs, warned that disinformation "is intended to deceive you and take power away from you and give it to another by denying you the truth." In Ethiopia, lack of trust in state-run media and significant barriers to independent journalism have accelerated reliance on social media for information, but false or misleading information quickly spreads on social media, exacerbating tensions that can lead to unrest and violence.

The program focused on educating media consumers and professionals on how to recognize fake news, check facts and avoid spreading misinformation. The event at the Addis Ababa American Center reached nearly 140,000 people on Facebook Live. Smith said media consumers do not make the effort to identify and avoid fake news, citing a Pew Research finding that around one in four Americans admit to having shared fake news, with a significant portion doing so knowingly.

During audience questioning, Smith highlighted the importance of checking facts, questioning motives and seeking a variety of news sources. He urged participants and Facebook viewers to be conscious of their own biases and not simply trust a report because it agrees with their point of view. "When we become too comfortable with the media we consume or sources we rely on is when we are beginning to get manipulated without even knowing it," he said.

During his visit, Smith collaborated with Ethiopian journalists on ways to combat the spread of misinformation by upholding journalistic standards and calling out fake news and unprofessional behavior. Participants were inspired to initiate regular meetings at the Addis Ababa American Center to cooperate in strengthening professional media in Ethiopia.

The various engagements with Smith initiated new conversations and opportunities for the embassy to continue engaging publicly and with its partners to support independent professional media in Ethiopia. ■





The Best Costume winner in U.S. Mission Sudan's Halloween party was Deputy Chief of Mission Ervin Massinga, whose look captures the ominous specter that once cast doubt on Sudan's future—sanctions.

*Photo by Keith Hughes*

## Halloween Party Celebrates Lifting of Sanctions

Revelers gathered at Embassy Khartoum's main housing compound to celebrate Halloween, but also to recognize the lifting of the two-decade-long broad trade embargo on Sudan. The embassy employees and Sudanese at Mission Sudan had done much work toward bringing Sudan to a place where the United States could consider Sudan sufficiently compliant to lift sanctions.

Among the improvements: The Sudanese opened humanitarian access throughout the country, maintained a durable cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile states), ceased support to South Sudanese rebel movements and cooperated on threats to regional security. The mission had urged progress toward these goals and had brought about dialogue and cooperation on security, defense, education, culture and economic matters. Mission employees also hosted numerous Washington visitors to communicate clearly where Sudan had made progress and where it had not. That whole-of-embassy effort helped make clear that Sudan has potential to be a partner in trade, enhancing stability in the region.

The Halloween party recognized the Oct. 12 decision with costumes that honored Sudan's past. Cleopatras danced with diplomats wearing full Roman legionnaire outfits (Nubian Pharaohs once ruled Egypt, and the Roman Empire once encroached on what is present-day Sudan). On the dance floor, costumes proclaimed the eventual triumph of diversity and self-expression in Sudan. In all, the celebration marked both the end of sanctions and the beginning of an era that will make a difference in Sudan and the region. ■



# Diversity Notes

GREG SMITH  
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS



## And the Winner Is...

I would like to begin the new year by recognizing the exceptional contributions made by our colleagues in helping to maintain a workplace that is fair, equitable and inclusive. Each year, the Department selects an employee to receive the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Award who has demonstrated effective leadership, skill, imagination and innovation in extending and promoting equal opportunity. In addition to public recognition, the award recipient receives a certificate from the secretary of state, \$10,000 in cash and a trip to Washington, D.C. (if overseas) for the Department's annual award ceremony.

The 2017 EEO Award winner was Jake Fairhurst, former regional human resources officer at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa. His contributions to the Department's EEO program are numerous. He helped strengthen the EEO program at post by making certain that all employees, including locally employed (LE) staff, received EEO training, and ensuring that such training was part of the training for all incoming employees. He also recruited more than 20 EEO Liaisons, resulting in a more robust program at post. Most notably, Fairhurst created a Professional Development Program (PDP) to target recruitment toward hiring LE staff with disabilities. The EEO Award Committee was impressed with the level to which he invested his time and efforts to ensure the success of that program.

Fairhurst created the PDP to provide professional-level employees who have disabilities and serve in Ethiopia with the work experience they need to find long-term employment. The PDP recruits individuals with disabilities who have university degrees and limited job experience for positions across the agencies at the embassy for a one- to two-year contract. These positions provide valuable professional experience.

Establishing the PDP was no easy task. Fairhurst conducted research by engaging with international and local disability rights organizations, and drafted a position description for a hybrid human resources assistant and disabilities advisor to manage the program and ensure continuity. His achievements are an excellent example of how innovation can foster greater inclusion.

The EEO Award Committee selected Christina Le as the 2017 runner-up. Le was chosen for her contributions as the current president of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association, an employee affinity group for which she coordinates two to four events per month, primarily on topics such as networking, career development and navigating transitions. Additionally, Le has done commendable work collaborating with the American Foreign Service Association to advocate for Asian-American Foreign Service officers who have received assignment restrictions.

The 2017 EEO Award Selection Committee included myself, Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley; Ambassador John A. Heffern, then acting assistant secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs; David Rodriguez, director, A/LM/OPS; Ambassador Daniel B. Smith, assistant secretary for Intelligence and Research; and Ambassador Donald Yamamoto, principal deputy assistant secretary for African Affairs. We thank them for their time and effort in reviewing nominations and selecting our 2017 awardees.

Both Fairhurst and Le have demonstrated their outstanding commitment to EEO principles. As we begin the new year, let us applaud our devoted colleagues for their achievements and roles in advancing diversity and inclusion. You do not necessarily need to create a new program or serve as president of an employee affinity group to make a difference: There are many ways to meaningfully contribute toward a more fair, equitable and inclusive organization.

The Office of Civil Rights is always excited to hear about EEO and diversity efforts across the Department and invites you to share with us by emailing [diversity@state.gov](mailto:diversity@state.gov). ■





# CRASH! BAWAG!

**FACT training prepares personnel for high-threat postings**

Story and Photos by Isaac D. Pacheco



**Opening photo:** FACT students crouch inside a concrete bunker during a simulated indirect fire attack.



**Click to watch video**

**O**n a crisp autumn morning in the rolling West Virginia countryside, a herd of white-tailed deer peer across the dew-covered grounds of a specialized training facility. A gust of wind kicks up a swirl of amber- and saffron-tinged leaves that have drifted from the surrounding forest, and the landscape glows with the warm hues of fall as students gather outside their classroom for the first seminar of the day. The tranquility of this idyllic scene is suddenly shattered as a thunderous blast echoes across the campus.

Caught off guard by the proximity of the explosion, the students dive for cover under a concrete shelter adjacent to their classroom. Seconds later, a second explosion rends the air, and small-arms fire erupts in the distance. The pungent scent of black powder fills the air as the students hunker down inside their cramped hiding place, unsure of what to do next. A minute later, their instructor peers inside and shouts, “All clear!” | *Cont.* | ▼





Two participants inspect the undercarriage of a vehicle for suspicious objects during a class about explosives-related threats.





Two FACT instructors demonstrate the proper technique for locating a sucking chest wound.

Despite having just come under “attack,” the students exit the bunker smiling and laughing. They have passed their first quiz in the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) training program at the Diplomatic Security Service’s (DSS) Interim Training Facility (ITF).

Department regulations require that all federal government employees traveling to high-threat, high-risk posts (HTHR) for permanent assignment (or more than 45 days of cumulative temporary duty in a calendar year) take FACT or High Threat Security Overseas Seminar (HTSOS) training. Domestically assigned Foreign Service and Civil Service employees, especially those who work in functional bureaus, are also encouraged to take FACT should course capacity allow. Enrollment is prioritized according to those whose current jobs involve potential travel to FACT-mandatory posts and whose anticipated onward assignment will take them to HTHR posts abroad.

The FACT course itself is a general security awareness program managed by DSS that enables effective diplomacy through stronger security and more resilient personnel. The course’s instruction modules are designed to prepare employees and eligible family members (EFM) from a diverse array of occupational backgrounds to live and work in HTHR environments abroad while serving under Department of State chief of mission authority. | *Cont.* | ▼



“FACT is the foundation for those serving at high-threat posts,” said Supervisory Special Agent Shawn Sherlock, DSS counter threat branch chief. “Each of the classes offered during the training are bricks that build upon that foundation.”

The course provides a scalable, student-centered approach to security awareness and situational response training, including classroom instruction and hands-on practical application sessions that culminate in final exercise scenarios. Students traveling to the highest threat locations, known as ESCAPE posts, are required to demonstrate additional proficiencies in five FACT classes (fire as a weapon, react to contact, triage, stairwell egress and helicopter boarding).

According to official DSS estimates, more than 25,000 people have completed FACT training at the ITF. The facility’s controlled training environment places a priority on professionalism and safety—a far remove from the war-torn locales for which some of its participants are preparing. Training officials say they have received numerous accounts from former students posted outside traditional HTHR posts that credit the training for helping them survive dangerous situations.

One such example relates to an incident that occurred Sept. 2, 2016. While on vacation at a remote lodge in Lesotho, a FACT graduate sustained gruesome, life-threatening wounds when he was gored in the abdomen by an eland (a large antelope found in east and southern Africa). Both the employee and his spouse attended the FACT course in July 2016 and credit the training they received, specifically the medical triage portion of instruction, with helping them calmly and quickly respond to the emergency.

During the FACT course’s final training exercise, a participant applies triage skills learned throughout the week to a simulated victim.





A plume of green smoke masks the egress of students from a simulated embassy compound during the course's final training exercise.







Participants engage with role-players in hypothetical real-world diplomacy scenarios during the course's final training exercise.

Their decisive actions and correct treatment of the wounds enabled the employee to stave off shock and survive a grueling land journey to a medical airlift hours away from the site of the accident. The employee made a full recovery.

The Department has adopted a phased approach to implementing updated FACT training requirements, beginning with AF posts, which became FACT-mandatory for those who completed a permanent change of station (PCS) after Jan. 1, 2016. NEA and SCA posts became FACT-mandatory on Jan. 1, 2017. All personnel completing a PCS to WHA posts after Jan. 1, 2018, will require FACT training—as will those who PCS to EUR and EAP posts after Jan. 1, 2019.

A training completion certificate for those who have taken FACT or HTSOS is considered valid for five years. Employees or employed EFMs assigned to a FACT-mandatory post are required to have a certificate valid at minimum through the date of arrival at post for their tour of duty. Employees and employed EFMs will otherwise be required to complete FACT during their next official travel to Washington, D.C., if their FACT certification will expire during the tour of duty and they have at least 180 days remaining in their assignment.

These requirements, along with the reclassification of a large number of embassies and consulates as HTHR posts, have increased demand for FACT training in recent years and spurred development of a purpose-built training facility for future classes. DSS officials are phasing in training at the new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett, Va., through early 2019.

For more information about FACT and HTHR training requirements, visit the Bureau of Diplomatic Security website.

■ *Isaac D. Pacheco is the editor-in-chief of State Magazine.*



# Unity in Diversity

**Native American cultural ambassadors share message of tolerance in Indonesia**

By Tashina Cooper

The dancer is poised on her tiptoes. Her heels elevate and descend rhythmically to the staccato drumbeat. Hundreds of hand-sewn beads on her deer-hide moccasins glimmer in the sun. Her footwork increases in complexity to match her spins. Her body collapses into a tight cocoon. With the next drumbeat, the butterfly takes flight under wings of a rainbow shawl.

Enraptured, hijab-clad high school students in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, snap photos of the dancer on their phones.







A member of the Kalimantan Dayak performs a traditional dance at @america after a presentation that explored the relationship between the Kalimantan Dayak and their traditional lands.

Photo by U.S. Embassy Jakarta

The “Fancy Shawl Dance” performance was one of many recent Native American-themed events organized by Mission Indonesia that focused on tolerance and targeted youth. Half of Indonesia’s population is under age 30, and the country’s 500 ethnic groups speak hundreds of languages. While Indonesia is more than 80 percent Muslim, it has provinces that are majority Hindu and Christian. Its modern state was founded on “Pancasila,” an idea that stands for people’s ability to live in harmony while coming from different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

In recent months, Mission Indonesia has sponsored Native American cultural ambassadors who visited schools and participated in festivals to promote tolerance and showcase American diversity. At these festivals, Native American artists danced, sang and told traditional stories. The mission’s programming culminated in November with a celebration of Native American Heritage Month.

Native American hoop dancer and flutist Kevin Locke, who is Lakota and Anishinabe, told reporters, “We made this trip from the Standing Rock Reservation to share our ancestral heritage with Indonesians. Indonesia has a national motto of ‘unity in diversity.’ The United States has something similar—*e pluribus unum*, meaning ‘out of many, one.’ This is a great model for the future because it is the only model that will ensure our future survival as a human family.”

Native American singers and dancers participated in the 32nd Gawai Festival in Pontianak to share a message of unity. Gawai are festivals of thanksgiving for the Dayak, who represent some of the indigenous peoples of Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia. The Native American performers were the first non-Dayak participants in the event’s history. The governor of West Kalimantan presided over the opening ceremony for an audience of 2,000. Afterward, the cultural ambassadors spoke about tolerance and danced in the first Bali Indigenous Festival, which drew more than 300 spectators from across the archipelago and featured traditional Native American, Indonesian Dayak and Balinese performers.

The month of November, recognized as Native American Heritage Month, marks a time to celebrate the contributions



Kevin Locke is a traditional Native American hoop dancer and flutist from the Lakota and Anishinabe nations. The large hoops he dances with symbolize the circle of life.

Photo by U.S. Embassy Jakarta



of American Indians and Alaska Natives to American society. Mission Indonesia's @america, a cultural center and event venue that provides policy-oriented programming for youth, celebrated the month by offering a series of five events and a social media campaign. More than 250 young Indonesians participated in the events, which centered on promoting respect for diversity and educating students on issues affecting Native American and Indonesian indigenous communities.

Jed Taro Dornburg, director of @america, said of the month's events, "Celebrating the rich history and cultures of Native Americans gives opportunity for Indonesian students to reflect on the diversity in their own country. It also builds bridges between our two countries and inspires respect for diversity."

During one event, Indonesian students compared the efforts of Native American communities to incorporate indigenous cultures and languages into classroom curricula to similar efforts in Indonesia. In the United States, congressionally funded boarding schools attempted to strip children of their tribal languages, native religions and cultural identities. Indonesian students learned how Native Americans are reclaiming their languages and traditional lifeways by establishing native-language immersion schools and tribal colleges. Students also discussed the need for respect of religious, linguistic and cultural diversity in education settings.

Students welcomed a representative and indigenous people's advocate from the Indonesian nonprofit SOKOLA, who described how the Orang Rimba, an indigenous group in Indonesia's rainforests, struggle to protect their community as the outside world encroaches, threatening the environment and their cultural traditions. To strengthen the Orang Rimba's ability to advocate for their land rights, SOKOLA

| Cont. | ▼



Tashina Cooper, vice consul and member of the Navajo Nation (second from left), meets with students after a presentation on tribal sovereignty. Students had fun posing with a cradleboard, Indian corn and Navajo rug.  
*Photo by U.S. Embassy Jakarta*



promotes literacy and sends educators to the jungle-based community. The speaker discussed some common misconceptions of indigenous groups held by many Indonesians, sparking conversations among students about overcoming stereotypes and respecting others.

Native American Peace Corps volunteers serving in Indonesia joined the mission's celebration of Native American Heritage Month on the @america stage. "Traditionally, my people served our community by becoming warriors," said Sapphire Carter of the Chippewa Cree Tribe. "Expanding upon the values taught to me by my grandmother and mother, I decided that I wanted to serve, not by becoming a warrior, but through peace." Peace Corps volunteers in Indonesia teach English at local schools and volunteer in other community endeavors. They also encourage young Indonesians to become active in their own communities in service capacities.

Asked how the series' programming affected her understanding of the United States, Mega Febriyanti, a college student studying Islamic broadcasting and communications at Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin, replied, "I learned that America and Indonesia are more alike than I had originally supposed. Our countries are both very diverse. In Indonesia, we have many indigenous people such as the Dayak, Baduy, Bugis and Sunda peoples. It turns out that there are still indigenous people in America who hold on to

Marcie "Happy" Frejo of the Seminole and Pawnee Tribes of Oklahoma captures audience attention with a traditional Native American song.

*Photo by U.S. Embassy Jakarta*





their rich culture and traditions. They struggle with many of the same issues as Indonesia's indigenous peoples. Respect of diversity is important for cultural survival.”

Through programming saluting Native Americans, Mission Indonesia deepened the bilateral relationship and inspired young Indonesians to embrace the diversity of their own country while learning about the diversity of ours.

■ *Tashina Cooper is the vice consul at Embassy Jakarta.*

Indonesian students at @america pose after a presentation on the tribal college movement and Native American and Native Hawaiian language immersion schools.

*Photo by U.S. Embassy Jakarta*





# LAST WALTZ

## FSO's band performs final concert in Lithuania

By John McDonald

**A**t my rock band's reunion concert in April, I looked out at the crowd from backstage and felt the butterflies I always get before we play. This time, it was harder for me to dismiss them—the other three members of the band and I had only practiced together twice during the past week and we had not performed a live show together for almost two years.

Nonetheless, our April concert, where we opened for legendary Lithuanian rockers Poliarizuoti Stiklai (Polarized Glass) at a music club in Vilnius, came off with only a couple minor glitches. I forgot some lyrics, we made some mistakes, but none of that kept us from enjoying playing together again. And I'll never forget the thrill of seeing so many friendly faces in the crowd and performing in such a great venue.

Our band, Soul Magnet, a name suggested by my wife, formed in early 2013 in Lithuania and stayed together until I departed in the summer of 2015. The band included me on lead vocals, Jaroslavas Bobrovas on guitar and backing vocals, Vilius Sapola on bass and Irmantas Suziedelis on drums. We had a website and played about 40 gigs in bars, clubs, festivals



**Opening Photo:** Soul Magnet performs its final concert in Lithuania in June 2015.  
*State Department photo*

and events around Lithuania. The band's performances were sometimes also posted to YouTube. That these videos still get "a few new views each week, after two years [of our] not playing, says it all," Bobrovas said recently. "It worked out quite well."

After I left Lithuania, I thought we'd never again perform together. Then, my family convinced me to go to Vilnius for our first R&R from Lusaka, Zambia, and I knew I had to do the one thing that would make my return visit the most fun: reunite for a gig with my Soul Magnet buddies. When would a chance like this come around again? Luckily, we were all up for it.

As a frustrated guitarist, I've been singing in rock cover bands with friends since my 20s. We never got too adventurous: just playing parties, VFW halls and similar venues. We also played a few original songs. But bands break up, people move on, life happens. So, I didn't do much musically for about 15 years.

During those 15 years, I met my wife, moved to Colorado, joined the Foreign Service and celebrated the birth of my two wonderful sons. I focused on family and career. During my tour in Caracas, however, a good friend, the attaché for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, coaxed me into playing acoustic guitar with him on his balcony. Jamming again felt so good that we decided to form a rock cover band with several Venezuelans who worked in the embassy. We eventually got a gig performing at the Hard Rock Café in Caracas on a monthly basis.

I was hooked all over again.

When I arrived in Vilnius in 2012, I put a notice on the message board at the main music store in town. After receiving some calls and playing music with a few people, I found a band called Deep Sea Divers, made up of five Lithuanians, most of whom had played in previous bands. We connected musically and personally, and they asked me to join.

Our first gig was on a sidewalk in Vilnius during the annual Street Music Day in 2013. It was a blast. With time, the band evolved to include drums, guitar, bass and vocals. Deep Sea Divers soon became Soul Magnet. We next created 10 original songs in about six months, and started playing any gig we could find.

It was difficult performing live during those first few months. We played original music, and no one



The author, second from left, poses with his band after a 2014 concert in Lithuania.

*State Department photo*

The author gets soulful at a concert in the Lithuanian town of Brodvejus.

*State Department photo*







The author sings with his  
band in Lithuania in 2014.  
*State Department photo*



knew our songs. But, after a while, it was a thrill to see familiar faces in the crowd singing along with Soul Magnet originals. We continued gigging, building a small following, and writing new material; we also added two cover songs, which we made our own.

Soul Magnet has been described as indie rock, classic rock and other labels, but we never tried to conform to any specific genre. Recently, the singer of my favorite band in Lusaka described Soul Magnet's sound as "old school punk meets funk under a blanket of classic rock 'n' roll." That sounds about right.

As a band, Soul Magnet's only goals were to create good songs, have fun on stage and make sure our audience had a great time too. We recorded our first album with 13 original songs and held a release party/farewell

While singing with Soul Magnet, the author pretends to ready the launch of his microphone stand.

*State Department photo*

concert in June 2015. The CD, to me, remains a tangible reminder of the brotherhood Soul Magnet will have for the rest of our lives, although the band is defunct. It's also a reminder of the many friendships I developed with local music lovers and musicians in Lithuania. When I'd chat with attendees before and after gigs, I'd sometimes hear that I was the only American they'd met.

Playing in bands in three foreign countries during the past seven years has afforded me a creative outlet as well as the means to meet locals and Americans who share a passion for rock 'n' roll. In Zambia, the rock scene is now emerging from a long dormancy and I want to be a part of its reawakening.

After all, rock 'n' roll never dies.

■ *John McDonald is the senior general services officer at Embassy Lusaka.*







# Mentoring at State

Developing the leaders of tomorrow

By Adam Sotomayor



This month marks the 16th anniversary of National Mentoring Month, a time to honor and celebrate mentorship and the difference it makes in developing the leaders of tomorrow. In recognition of the occasion, Steve Walker, deputy assistant secretary in the Office of the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of the Bureau of Human Resources (HR), spoke to his commitment to mentoring. He emphasized “the importance of Department employees continuously asking themselves what more they can do to prepare the next generation of leaders in light of a more purpose-driven and more tech-enabled work environment. The most important actions we take as leaders and managers are about people: training them, developing them, supporting them and empowering them.”

Mentor-mentee relationships come in all shapes and sizes, and the Department has embraced this reality by facilitating programs for the Foreign Service, Civil Service and locally employed (LE) staff. With approximately 60 percent of our workforce having 10 years or less of experience, there is no better time to consider the impact of formal, informal and reverse mentoring.

The HR Bureau recognizes that the diverse nature of our overseas missions and domestic operations means there is no one-size-fits-all approach to professional development and leadership skills. One of the Department’s Leadership and Management Principles, Value and Develop People, gets at the core of what mentoring stands for. “Fostering a culture of mentorship that supports ongoing professional development and competency building must be a long-standing, Department-wide commitment at all levels,” said Carmen Cantor, director of the Office of Civil Service Human Resource Management and a career member of the Senior Executive Service.

The best leaders are often great mentors devoted to bringing others along. Julie Chung, director of the Office of Japanese Affairs in EAP, launched a midlevel mentoring program when she was deputy chief of mission in Cambodia. “Mentoring,” she remarked, “is just as beneficial for the mentor as the mentee because it reinforces your enthusiasm and love for the Department and its mission.” Chung, minister-counselor in the Senior Foreign Service and a member of the inaugural Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellows Class, attributed part of her success to the Foreign Service Mentoring Program and believes that all former mentees should lead by example and take ownership by mentoring successor generations.

Leadership is less about creating followers and more about creating other leaders. Don Jacobson, who is currently director of the Office of Central American Affairs in WHA, and who previously

| Cont. | ▼



Experienced Foreign Service Specialists facilitate mentor dialogues at Foreign Service Specialists orientation.

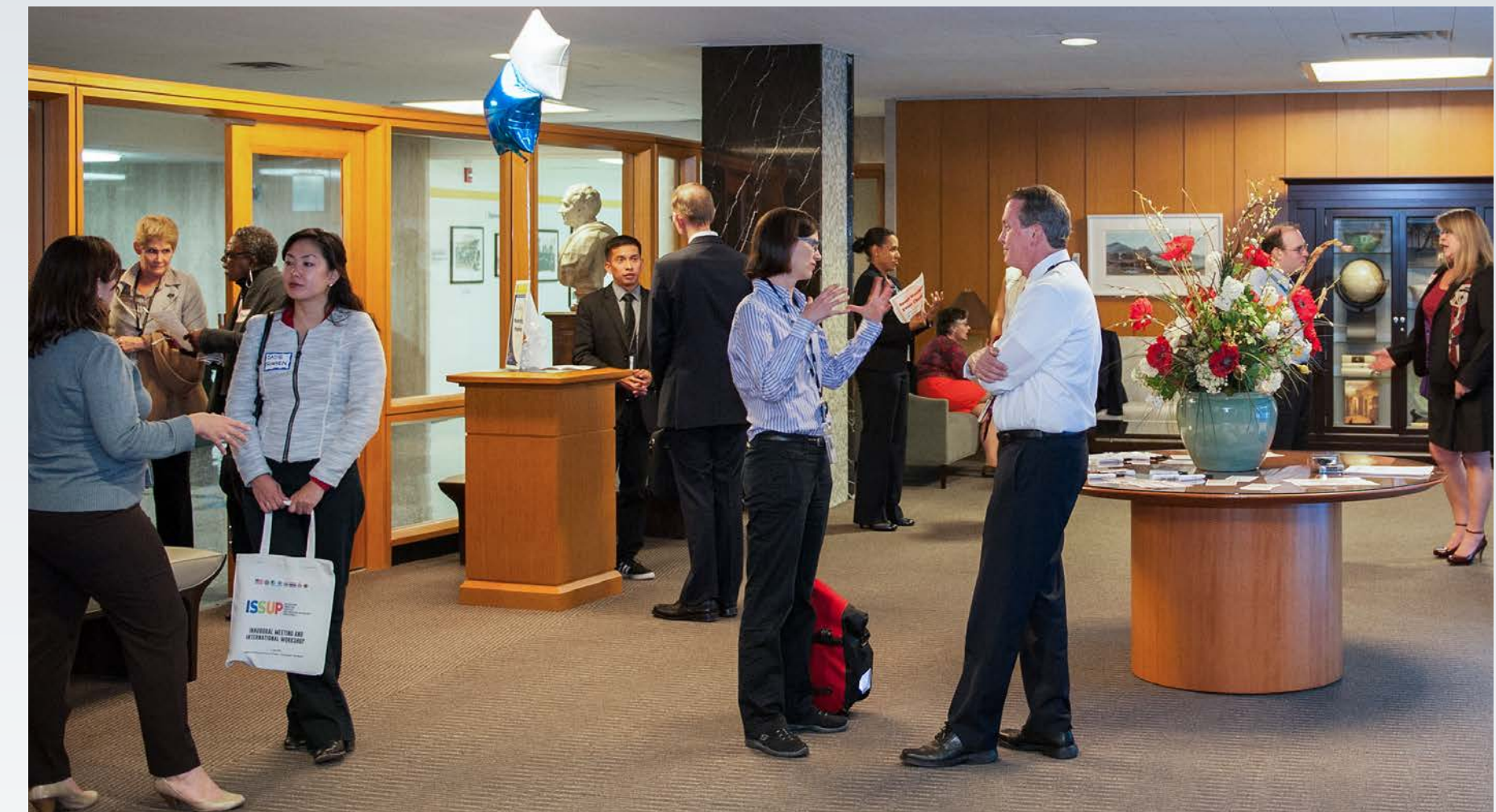
*Photo by Heidi Howland*



launched a midlevel mentoring program at U.S. Mission Mexico, places a premium on setting the right tone early on. “If we can get our people off to a good start and support their development as leaders, then as they move up the ranks, they’ll take care of their people and we’ll have happier teams spreading throughout the organization,” he said. “Leadership is really about taking ownership of your work and your work environment, and trying to make things better.”

Authentic and relationship-based mentorship provides employees the opportunity to voice their concerns, overcome hurdles and find solutions. This past year marked the continued success of the 14-year-old Civil Service Mentoring Program, which has featured an innovative process to match more than 400 Civil and Foreign Service mentors with Civil Service mentees. It is one of the largest such programs in the federal government. Carrie Green was recently honored as the 2017 State-USAID Civil Service Mentoring Program Champion. Green’s mentees underscored how instrumental she was in helping them navigate their careers by asking pointed questions and formulating a strategy to familiarize them with the culture of the Department and its functions. Other mentees at the Department spoke to this very idea when describing the impact of their mentoring relationship. One mentee noted that his mentor has been “an incredible inspiration on what it means to be a motivational leader and effective manager.” Another mentee expressed immense gratitude for her mentor: “She selflessly shared her time with me in regular meetings, listened carefully and compassionately, and always had a positive attitude. She brought a great deal of professional and personal experience to bear on our conversations and offered sound, concrete, strategic advice for next steps.”

Mentoring is about the future, about preparing the next generation of leaders and helping employees develop to their fullest potential throughout their careers. HR helped do just that when it collaborated with the Una Chapman Cox Foundation on a comprehensive two-part study to strengthen the Department’s Foreign Service mentoring programs. HR is in the process of rolling out a series of exciting new initiatives, including a mentoring database to match mentors and mentees, toolkits, training resources, and an overall strategy that mentors and mentees can tap into worldwide. In 2017, hundreds of new Foreign Service employees participated in the first ever Mentor Dialogue sessions at the Foreign Service Institute, which focused on diversity, inclusion and



Mentors pair off with mentees to discuss career development at the State-USAID Civil Service Mentoring Program's Speed Mentoring Event.

*Photo by Heidi Howland*



New-hire Foreign Service Specialists exchange takeaways from their Mentor Dialogues on professional development.

*Photo by Heidi Howland*



network building. Additionally, HR launched a midlevel mentor program for more than 60 Foreign Service Officers and Specialists serving in their first domestic assignment. Moreover, HR's Situational Mentoring program, in place since 2010, has facilitated mentoring for 9,000 employees. Situational mentors provide the right counsel at the right time and are usually available to help solve a quick problem, uncover a hidden talent or develop a new skill.

Mentoring opportunities do not end with HR programs and initiatives. Some of the best mentoring relationships are those that develop organically between employees serving together; like mentors assigned through HR programs, these relationships can last for decades. Andrei Cotton, deputy director of the Office of Terrorist Screening and Interdiction, credits an informal discussion he had with a deputy chief of mission when he was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador for his decision to join the Foreign Service. "Throughout my career," said Cotton, "senior members of the Department invariably took the time to respond to my questions, offer professional advice and share unfiltered wisdom, and these meaningful interactions influenced my appreciation of a life dedicated to public service."

The strongest and most effective employees are those who instinctively lend a hand to colleagues who are more junior or senior to them, as they undertake the challenge of adjusting to a new post or a new assignment. Reverse mentoring is crucial to bridging generational gaps. It allows junior employees to assist senior leadership with understanding new workforce trends and technological innovations. American organizations spent about \$80 million on generational consulting last year, according to Source Global Research. That is all the more reason to ensure newer employees have opportunities to share their insights with senior leaders and another reason to encourage reverse mentoring opportunities.

HR offers a variety of resources to facilitate mentoring at the Department, but ultimately the relationship is yours to build. HR encourages you to visit the Mentoring Portal for toolkits and resources on how to make the most of your mentoring relationship. You can get involved with mentoring by emailing [csmentoring@state.gov](mailto:csmentoring@state.gov) for Civil Service mentoring and [fsmentoring@state.gov](mailto:fsmentoring@state.gov) for Foreign Service mentoring.

■ *Adam Sotomayor is a program analyst in DGHR's Strategic Communications Unit.*



Susan Crystal, director of the Office of Career Development and Assignments in the Bureau of Human Resources, urges employees to take advantage of mentoring opportunities.

*Photo by Heidi Howland*



Julie Chung demonstrates her commitment to professional development by mentoring first- and second-tour officers.

*Photo courtesy of Julie Chung*



# Baghdad

Mission Iraq promotes economic opportunities

By Erik J. Schnotala



The second half of 2017 was a remarkable time for Iraq. With the help of the United States and partner nations, the Iraqi government successfully liberated the cities of Mosul, Tall Afar, Hawijah and Al Qaim from ISIS control. These victories, culminating in the Dec. 10 announcement of the full liberation of Iraqi territory from ISIS, mark the conclusion of an important chapter in Iraq's history. After years of war, the next phase in Iraq's recovery will be securing its economic future. This presents a unique opportunity for American businesses as the Iraqi government begins shifting focus to economic priorities—including the reconstruction of liberated areas—in a post-ISIS landscape.

It takes a special kind of determination to do business in Iraq. The security situation presents a formidable set of challenges, even as relative stability has returned to much of the country. At the same time, the regulatory and administrative obstacles are daunting. Iraq currently ranks 168 out of 190 countries on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. Despite some improvements over the past year, it still takes an average of eight procedures and 26 days to start a business. Anecdotes from U.S. companies reveal an often bewildering and frustrating process. Licenses and permits—even just getting the Iraqi government to approve the name of a new company—cost time and money.

All of that happens only after arriving in Iraq, but the unpredictability of the visa process makes it hard for business travelers to get there in the first place. Companies sometimes pay thousands of dollars for expeditors to arrange the necessary paperwork. Even then, a visa in hand does not guarantee entry. Travelers with visas issued abroad are sometimes denied entry without clear justifications. Faced with such a difficult first step to doing business in Iraq, many potential commercial partners simply walk away.

Despite these challenges, there are significant commercial opportunities in Iraq. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad advocates for U.S. companies and works directly with government | *Cont.* | ▼



Ambassador Silliman meets with a group of dynamic Iraqi entrepreneurs from the business, cultural and medical fields who attended the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in India.

*State Department photo*



officials to help level the playing field. Sometimes it is about removing obstacles; other times it is about troubleshooting the inevitable complications that arise in dealing with the Iraqi government's bureaucracy. But with persistence and follow-through, the embassy has seen big wins over the last few months.

In May 2017, Ambassador Douglas Silliman led a delegation of Ministry of Oil officials to the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston, Texas. Iraq produces about 4.5 million barrels of oil per day, and while natural gas is a byproduct of much of this production, Iraq lacks the infrastructure to process the natural gas. Instead, it flares the gas, burning potential income and polluting the air. During the conference, economic section staff and Department of Commerce officials set up meetings for Iraqi officials with several American energy companies. One of these companies, Orion Gas Processors, offered a solution that would allow the Iraqi government to use or sell this gas. After months of discussion, the Ministry of Oil is now considering a deal that would have Orion install a gas-capture and processing facility in Iraq's southern region. The facility would initially capture about 150 million standard cubic feet per day of natural gas, enough to produce about 440 megawatts of electricity and power more than 12,000 households. The deal requires no up-front investment from the Iraqi government and will reduce pollution and contribute up to \$100 million annually to government coffers. Orion's vice president, Ryan Manicom, said, "The State Department and Embassy Baghdad have been | *Cont.* | ▼



Workers unload a shipment of American rice for the Iraqi Ministry of Trade. The Iraqi government purchases agricultural commodities and then distributes them to the Iraqi people through a large-scale public distribution system.

*Photo by USA Rice*



tremendously supportive in every step of this process, from engaging with the prime minister’s office to helping get Iraqi visas for our project engineers. We could not have done it without them.”

Orion is not alone. In October 2017, the U.S. firm BlueSky Energy signed a 25-year power purchase agreement with the Ministry of Electricity, valued at \$1 billion. The deal will produce 1,000 megawatts of electricity using solar renewable energy technology, which is ideally suited for Iraq’s climate. The technology produces fresh water as a by-product and will bring much-needed electricity and irrigation water to Iraqis living in rural areas.

American companies have the expertise to provide solutions to many of Iraq’s challenges. By facilitating these types of deals, Embassy Baghdad is helping both American firms and the Iraqi government.

Sometimes Embassy Baghdad supports U.S. companies simply by helping them navigate the complexities of Iraqi government bureaucracy. In 2016, an Iraqi interministerial committee determined that any importer of poultry into Iraq must submit to an annual inspection—of each one of its facilities. With literally hundreds of facilities located across the United States, American exporters found this unfeasible. Implementation of the new regulation would have jeopardized more than \$60 million in annual U.S. exports. As Jim Sumner, president of the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC), explained, “In a situation of desperation, USAPEEC reached out to Ambassador

| Cont. | ▼



Ambassador Silliman inspects a water treatment plant in Fallujah in July 2017. U.S. companies can provide commercial solutions to a broad range of Iraq’s infrastructure needs.

*State Department photo*





Two young Iraqi boys guide their herd of sheep through a security point near Wana, Iraq, Nov. 15, 2017. *Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Tracy McKithern*



Silliman to ask if he could intervene and come up with an alternative plan.” Silliman rolled up his sleeves and got to work, meeting with the minister of agriculture and negotiating a compromise that satisfied both the Iraqi government and U.S. industry. Rather than inspecting every facility, Iraqi officials would only inspect one facility per company. After months of negotiating painstaking details, the eight-person delegation traveled to the United States and completed its inspection in November 2017. Sumner said that Silliman’s involvement ensured “that chicken exports to Iraq were never disrupted and U.S. poultry products could continue to flow.”

Poultry importation regulations are just one small facet of the Iraqi government’s dominating role in the nation’s agricultural market. As in command economies, the Iraqi government purchases large amounts of commodities and then distributes them to the Iraqi people through a large-scale public distribution system. Foreign companies compete for these sales through an intricate public procurement process, and winners are not always chosen for providing the highest quality products at the lowest prices.

Over the past couple of years, American companies have been disqualified for tenders through Kafkaesque governmental machinations. When a U.S. company lost a wheat tender, even though it offered the lowest price bid, Mission Iraq was told the company did not meet the specifications for “chalky kernels,” a term that only applies to rice. Despite these challenges, the embassy kept pressing along with its allies throughout the Iraqi government. From the ambassador reaching out to the prime minister’s office to economic officers working hand in hand with ministry directors-general, the embassy helped keep the process honest. This engagement has already paid dividends. Over the course of several weeks in the second half of 2017, U.S. firms Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) and Cargill inked more than \$190 million in rice

| Cont. | ▼



The American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) is one of the embassy’s strong partners in Iraq. Here, Ambassador Silliman poses with AmCham board members Rasheed Janabi, Jo Morrison and Christian Ronnow.

*State Department photo*



and wheat sales. These were the first wheat sales by U.S. firms since 2015, and Cargill's first grain sale in Iraq since 2005. As ADM representative Jorge Rodriguez put it, "Not only does the embassy help us navigate the many hurdles of the Iraqi bureaucracy, but an engaged embassy staff lowers the risk of our sales and execution, allowing us to chase bigger deals."

Faced with the twin challenges of ISIS and lower oil prices, Iraq has been working to get its finances in order. In 2016, the government signed a \$5.4 billion Stand-by Arrangement with the International Monetary Fund that sets a framework of macro-fiscal reforms to stabilize Iraq's economy and lay the groundwork for private sector growth. Last year, Iraq successfully participated in the international bond market, issuing a \$1 billion bond guaranteed by the U.S. government in January 2017 and a second \$1 billion unsecured bond in August. Both were oversubscribed, reflecting new confidence in the Iraqi economy. Following these successes, the Iraqi government took further steps to make it easier to do business and attract investment. With support from USAID and the economic section, the prime minister's office created an Economic Reform Unit to tackle these challenges.

Mission Iraq's economic section is also partnering with experts from the Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to promote simplified administrative procedures through an "e-regulations" project. The project, which has proven successful in countries like Guatemala, Vietnam and Tanzania, maps government procedures and identifies the legislative and administrative requirements underpinning each step. This provides ways to streamline and simplify any process. Focused on improving the investment climate, the project will make it easier for foreign and domestic firms to do business in Iraq. | *Cont.* | ▼



The spiral Malwiya Minaret of the 9th-century Great Mosque of Samarra, northwest of Baghdad, is a prominent Iraqi landmark. *Photo by David Stanley*



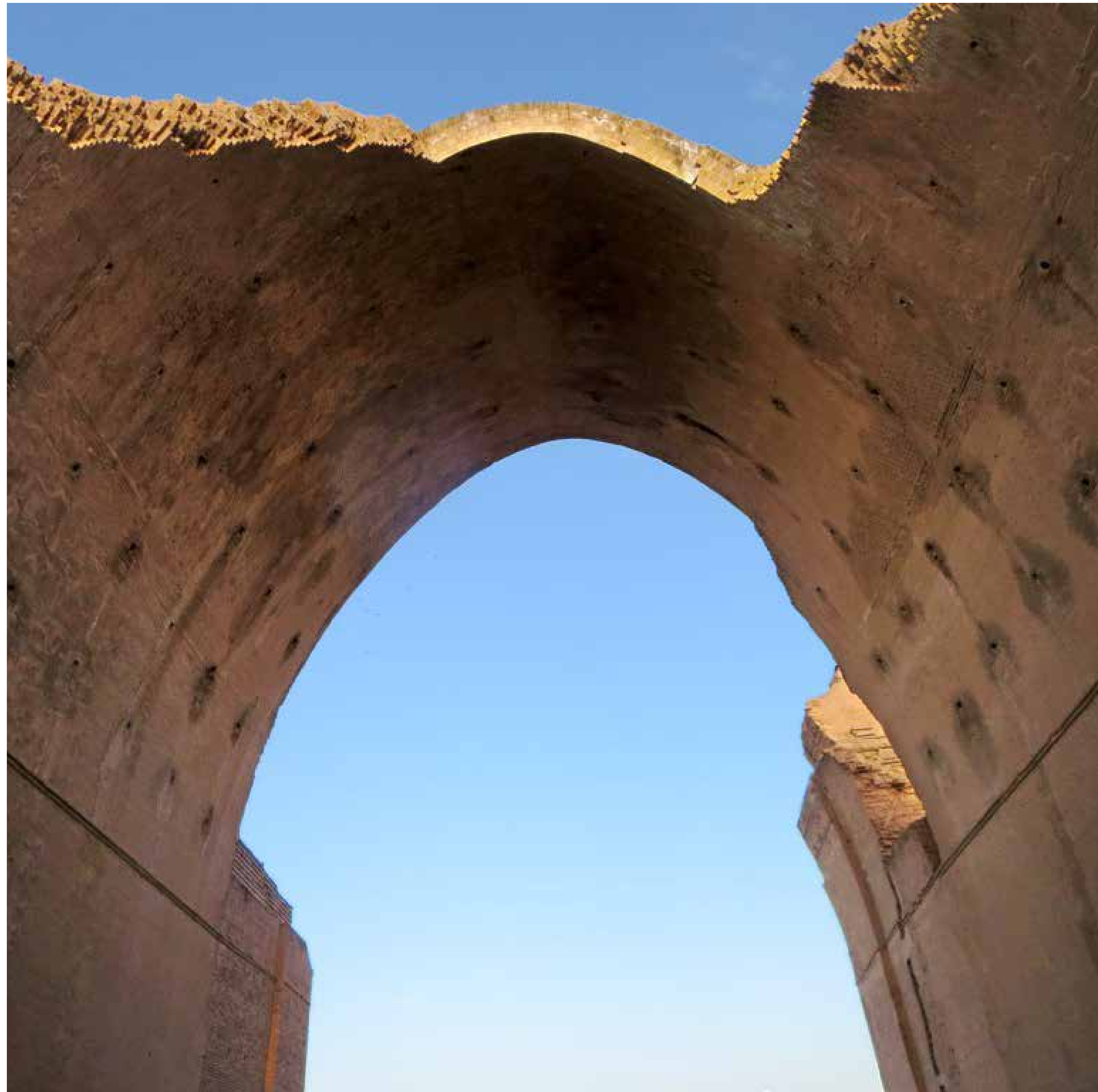


Young Iraqi students pose for a photo at a primary school in Mosul, Iraq, Nov. 13, 2017. Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Tracy McKithern

Despite these successes, the embassy team remains realistic about the challenges of doing business in Iraq. ISIS is steadily losing the little territory it retains, and the military battle will be over soon. But the ideological battle will continue over competing visions of Iraq's future. Supporting crucial economic reforms, deepening bilateral commercial ties and making it easier for U.S. firms to do business in Iraq are all central to the next phase of the U.S.-Iraq strategic partnership.

While Iraq's business environment remains fragile, and commercial triumphs can easily give way to commercial disputes, Lisa Stratton, Embassy Baghdad's trade and investment officer, remains upbeat: "All the twists and turns—that's what makes this job fun."

■ *Erik J. Schnotala is the deputy economic counselor at Embassy Baghdad.*



The Tāq Kasrā, also known as the Archway of Ctesiphon, is located near the modern town of Salman Pak, Iraq. It is the only visible remaining structure of the ancient city of Ctesiphon, and is the largest single-span vault of unreinforced brickwork in the world. Photo by David Stanley



## At a Glance

## Iraq

الله أكبر

**Capital:**  
Baghdad

**Government Type:**  
federal parliamentary republic

**Area:**  
438,317 sq km

**Population:**  
39,192,111 (July 2017 est.)

**Major urban areas:**  
Baghdad (capital) 6.643 million; Mosul 1.694 million; Erbil 1.166 million; Basra 1.019 million; As Sulaymaniyah 1.004 million; Najaf 889,000 (2015)

**Languages:**  
Arabic (official), Kurdish (official), Turkmen (a Turkish dialect), Syriac (Neo-Aramaic) and Armenian are official in areas where native speakers of these languages constitute a majority of the population

**Ethnic groups:**  
Arab 75%-80%, Kurdish 15%-20%, Turkmen, Assyrian, Shabak, Yazidi, other 5%

**Religions:**  
Muslim (official) 99% (Shia 55-60%, Sunni 40%), Christian <.1%, Yazidi <.1%, Sabeen Mandaeen <.1%, Baha'i <.1%, Zoroastrian <.1%, Hindu <0.1%, Buddhist <0.1%, Jewish <0.1%, folk religion <0.1, unaffiliated 0.1%, other <0.1%

**Note:** While there has been voluntary relocation of many Christian families to northern Iraq, recent reporting indicates that the overall Christian population may have dropped by as much as 50 percent since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, with many fleeing to Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon (2010 est.)

**Exports (commodities):**  
crude oil, crude materials excluding fuels, food, live animals

**Export partners:** China 21.9%, India 20.6%, U.S. 12.3%, South Korea 10.3%, Italy 6.8%, Greece 5.4% (2016)

**Imports (commodities):**  
food, medicine, manufactures

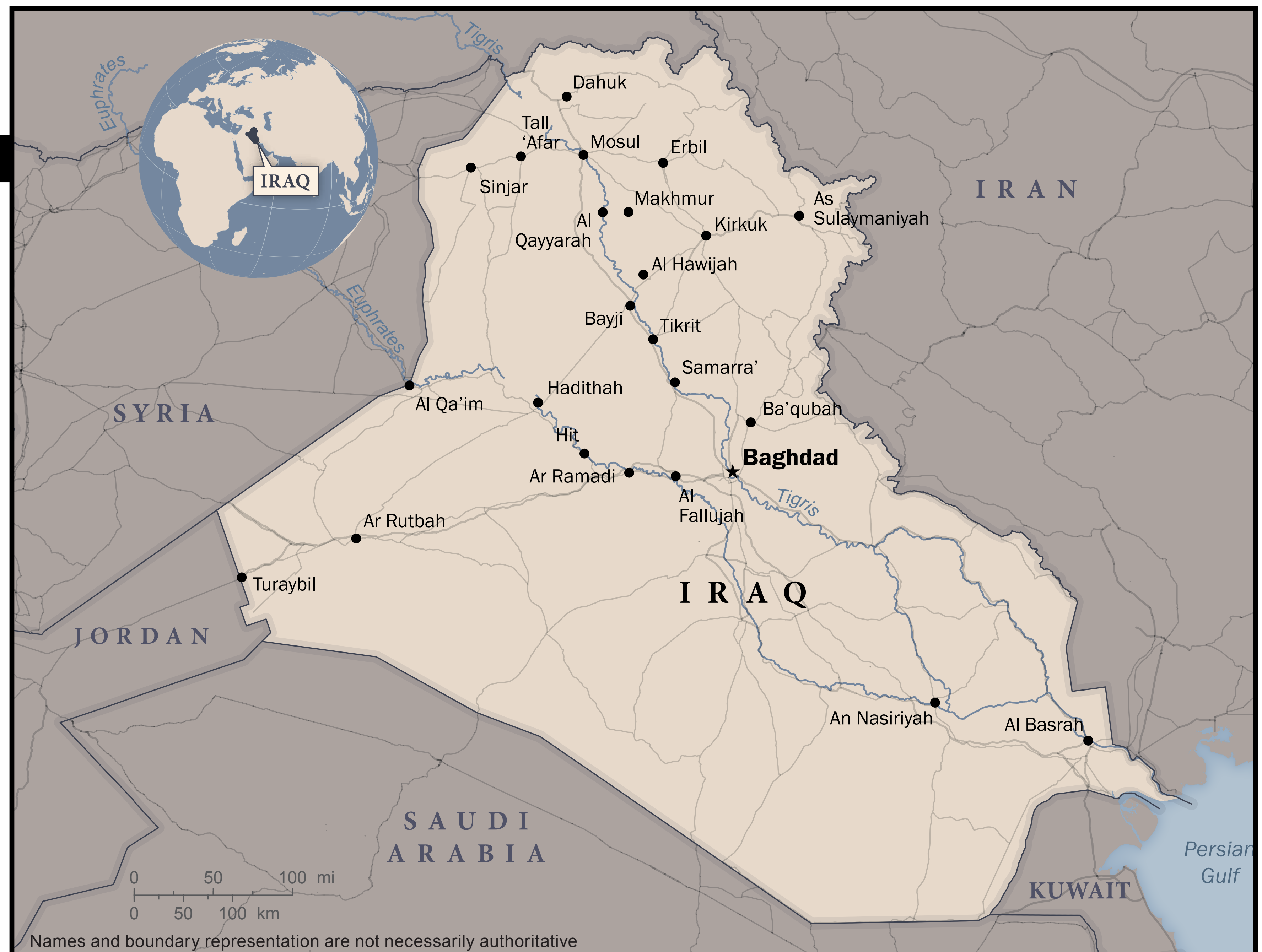
**Import partners:** China 26.9%, Turkey 26.6%, South Korea 5%, U.S. 4.4% (2016)

**Currency:**  
Iraqi dinars

**Internet country code:** .iq

\* The CIA World Factbook

Return



Map produced by the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues



# Giving Back

## AAFSW honors exceptional volunteers for worldwide service

By Joanna Athanasopoulos Owen



From left: Anna Dworken (2017 Lesley Dorman Award winner), Craig Houston (EAP 2017 SOSA winner), Grace Anne Turner (AF 2017 SOSA winner), AAFSW President Dr. Joanna Athanasopoulos Owen, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources Constance Dierman, Alesia Krupenikava (EUR 2017 SOSA winner), Kelly Bemby Midura (2017 Tragen Award winner), Maritza Wilson (WHA 2017 SOSA winner) and Judy Ikels (2017 CCE-EFM Award winner).

*Photo by Mark Stewart*

I believe that by knowing one's preference in a volunteer project you can identify one's true passion. That is certainly the view I offered at the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide's (AAFSW) November event honoring the winners of the 2017 Secretary of State Award (SOSA) for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad. The annual event recognizes outstanding volunteer activities by U.S. government employees and family and household members serving overseas.

This year's five SOSA winners were chosen by their geographic bureaus, the Family Liaison Office (FLO) and AAFSW, the nonprofit volunteer organization for the Foreign Service community, and all reflect how American altruism is the essence of soft diplomacy.

One winner responded to the dangers of a clinic's slow patient intake and patients' risk of dehydration. That led Grace Anne Turner, the winner from the Bureau of African Affairs, to join the staff of House of Hope in Dakar, Senegal. At the large primary care clinic, which sees 35,000 patients per year, "Dr. Grace," a registered nurse, formed a cadre of expat volunteers who helped speed patient intake dramatically, trained mothers to rehydrate their ill children at home and implemented a World Health Organization triage system to help clinic staff identify critically ill patients. "In every step, I treat



others not as I would like them to treat me but as I would like them to treat my parents or my children,” said Turner.

Another winner said he wanted to respond to air pollution, particularly due to its impact on babies such as his own. Craig Houston said the pall of deadly smoke in northern Thailand, filled with dangerous fine particulates (PM2.5), kills 3,500 people annually. Houston, an environmental scientist who won for the East Asia and Pacific Bureau, attributed the pollution to the region’s annual agricultural burning. Houston promoted awareness, information sharing and sustainable solutions by creating a website and assisting eight schools and local businesses to obtain and install PM2.5 air quality monitors, buy air purifiers for classrooms and modify their outdoor activities. “You really feel part of a community when you work together on something meaningful for the people with whom you share a home,” Houston said.

Another honoree commented, “Young women can be creators and innovators of technology, not just consumers; they just need to believe in themselves.” Alesia Krupenikava, winner from the Europe and Eurasia Bureau, is the spouse of a consular officer in Kyiv, and recruited more than 150 girls (ages 10–18), plus 50 mentors to coach them. That effort aimed to help the girls compete in the Technovation Challenge in Ukraine. She also helped raise \$20,000 to send a team to the challenge’s finals in San Francisco, and partnered with Microsoft and the Ukraine Ministry of Education. Krupenikava’s volunteer efforts drew teams of school-aged girls from all over Ukraine to a university-hosted event where teams pitched their projects and presented demo sessions to a panel of judges. Participants included young women from orphanages, families-in-crisis centers and HIV monitoring facilities. The winning team received a prize and the opportunity to attend the San Francisco event. “The real reward is showing young girls of what they can be capable,” Krupenikava emphasized.

A fourth winner was recognized for getting visiting sailors to volunteer in various communities of Sri Lanka. The sailors were from the *USS Blue Ridge*, *USS Hopper* and *USS Comstock*, and were joined by personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Colombo and Sri Lankan sailors. With each ship’s docking, Lisa Hess, who won for the South and Central Asia Bureau and leads the Embassy Colombo community outreach team, identified areas of need. She implemented projects such as refurbishing a local playground,



AAFSW Lifetime Achievement Award winner Jewell Fenzi and family pose with Dr. Joanna Athanasopoulos Owen.  
*Photo courtesy of AAFSW*



2017 SOSA winner for the AF Bureau Grace Anne Turner treats patients in Dakar.

*Photo courtesy of AAFSW*

| Cont. | ▼



classrooms, medical unit and multipurpose room; offering lessons and training in tooth brushing and oral hygiene; and working at a no-kill animal shelter to improve conditions for the staff and animals.

“Volunteering to practice my own profession in my native country made me feel uniquely equipped and utterly complete,” said the fifth winner, Maritza Wilson, from the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Wilson volunteered at the Amos Foundation, a nonprofit clinic serving a barrio in Managua, Nicaragua, and in a remote village on the impoverished Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast. She joined volunteer doctors on their home visits and home surveys to train locals in basic health care, and trained brigades of U.S. and Nicaraguan volunteers to maximize their effectiveness in practicing sustainable medicine in rural areas. She also provided family life education and disease prevention instruction at local high schools. “The results of my work often manifest immediately through healthier patients and better quality of life in the community,” Wilson said.

To highlight the best of American volunteerism abroad, James Baker, then secretary of state, and his wife established the SOSA in 1990 together with AAFSW. Besides the SOSA honors given at this year’s ceremony, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources Constance Dierman and I presented other awards to Foreign Service community volunteers.

Judy Ikels received the 2017 AAFSW Champions of Career Enhancement for Eligible Family Members Award for advancing EFM employment throughout her career. Ikels developed policy and managed programs covering telework and workplace flexibility, leave and travel, and workers’ compensation, and was part of the Family Liaison Office team that developed the Family Member Appointment, piloted the Global Employment Initiative and lobbied for the “PIT Buy-Back.” She said the joint HR MED Wellness



2017 SOSA winner for the EAP Bureau Craig Houston explains to Thai people from the local community how the air pollution sensor installed works and for what it is used.  
*Photo courtesy of AAFSW*



Fourteen teams of school-age girls pose with 2017 SOSA winner for the EUR Bureau, bottom left, Alesia Krupenikava and present their mobile apps at the First Regional Technovation Challenge Pitch Event at Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Kyiv, Ukraine, May 13, 2017.

*Photo courtesy of AAFSW*





2017 SOSA winner for the WHA Bureau Maritza Wilson helps Fundación Amos complete asthma research in a small community in Managua.

*Photo courtesy of AAFSW*

For pioneering work in recording the Oral History of the American Diplomatic Spouse, the AAFSW Lifetime Achievement Award went to Jewell Fenzi, author of “Married to the Foreign Service” (1994), a book based on Fenzi’s interviews with more than 170 American Foreign Service spouses. Records of these interviews are in the Library of Congress. (AAFSW plans to reactivate the Spouse Oral History Program.)

Foreign Service community volunteers envision, inspire and “live” volunteerism while transforming lives and leading ourselves and others to hope, dream and celebrate unprecedented accomplishments. To nominate an outstanding volunteer in 2018, contact: [office@aafsw.org](mailto:office@aafsw.org).

■ *Joanna Athanasopoulos Owen, Ph.D., is the president of AAFSW.*

program initiated in Bogota recently will create new opportunities for EFM’s to work as coordinators.

DACOR also recognized Kelly Bembry Midura with the Irvin and Eleanor Dodson Tragen Award for enhancing the global rights and benefits provided to the Foreign Service family by promoting post websites and Facebook groups and maintaining her blog “Well, That Was Different.” The blog addresses Foreign Service and expatriate topics.

Since 1993, AAFSW honors a member for outstanding volunteer service in all aspects of the organization. This year, the Lesley Dorman Award went to Anna Dworken, who was active in setting up the Foreign Service Spouses Network. As an AAFSW Bookroom volunteer, she appraises collectible donated books for the annual AAFSW Art and Book Fair. “Book donations help AAFSW fund scholarships and support members in family crises,” she explained.



## **Larry E. André Jr. - U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti**

Larry E. André Jr. (SFS) of Texas is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. André, an American diplomat since 1990, was most recently ambassador to Mauritania. A two-time DCM, he has had appointments to nine missions abroad, mostly in Africa, and has held senior policy positions at the Department. His experience working with the U.S. military strengthened his ability to advance U.S. policy goals in the Horn of Africa. He earned a B.A. from Claremont McKenna College and an MBA from Arizona State University's American Graduate School of International Management.

## **Peter H. Barlerin - U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon**

Peter H. Barlerin (SFS) of Colorado is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. A diplomat since 1989, Barlerin has been DAS in the Bureau of African Affairs since 2016. He has also served as DCM and in senior-level positions at the Department. An economist, he has served at seven missions overseas. He earned an M.A. from the University of Maryland, College Park and a B.A. from Middlebury College. He speaks French, Japanese, Spanish and Norwegian.

## **Richard D. Buchan III - U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and Andorra**

Richard D. Buchan III of North Carolina is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and Andorra. Buchan is the founder and CEO of Hunter Global Investors, a private investment management firm. Previously, he was a vice president at Merrill Lynch, where he specialized in corporate finance and mergers and acquisitions in Europe, Latin America and the United States. He received a B.A. in economics and Spanish from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He speaks Spanish and has a working knowledge of Catalan.

## **Thomas L. Carter - Representative of the U.S. on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization**

Thomas L. Carter of South Carolina is the new Representative of the U.S. on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization with the rank of ambassador. A former military and commercial pilot, Carter retired from the U.S. Air Force Reserve in 2009 with the rank of major general. He flew for U.S. Airways and was vice president for government relations at Elbit Systems; president of Commonwealth Consulting Corporation; senior counselor to the Coalition Provisional Authority for legislative affairs in Baghdad; and assistant to the chairman for government affairs of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board in Washington, D.C. Earlier, he was a deputy assistant secretary of defense. He earned a B.S. from the University of Memphis and an M.A. from Georgetown University.



A dark grey desk with various items: a spiral-bound notebook with lined pages in the top left, a black pencil resting on it, a pair of black-rimmed glasses in the center left, and a silver pen in the bottom left.

### **Michael J. Dodman - U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania**

Michael J. Dodman (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Dodman was executive assistant in the Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment. A career diplomat since 1987, his previous assignments include principal officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi, Pakistan; economic counselor at the U.S. Mission to the European Union; and economic counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. He has a B.S. from Georgetown University, an M.A. from Boston University and an M.P.P. from Princeton University.

### **Nina M. Fite - U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola**

Nina M. Fite (SFS) of Pennsylvania is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola. An American diplomat since 1990, Fite was principal officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Montreal from 2011 to 2014. She is known for her leadership skills, knowledge of Angola and record promoting U.S. trade and foreign direct investment, including as a negotiator in the office of the U.S. Trade Representative. She has served at seven U.S. missions overseas and in senior leadership positions at the Department. She earned an M.S. from the National Defense University, an MBA from Arizona State University's Thunderbird School of Global Management and a B.Arch. from Carnegie Mellon University. She speaks Portuguese, French, Spanish and Hungarian.

### **Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick - U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**

Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. A diplomat since 1983, Fitzpatrick was PDAS in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and has served as DAS in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and in other senior positions in the Department. She earned an M.S. from the U.S. National War College, an M.A. from Georgetown University and a B.A. from the University of Dayton. Fitzpatrick has received the President's Rank Award for Meritorious Service and is the 2017 recipient of the Department's Arnold L. Raphel Award. She speaks Dutch, French, Spanish, Russian and some Arabic.

### **Daniel L. Foote - U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia**

Daniel L. Foote (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. A diplomat since 1998, Foote was deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and is a two-time DCM. He has held senior foreign policy positions and is known for his leadership acumen, judgment and management of several large U.S. government overseas programs in some of the world's most challenging, high-threat environments. He earned a B.A. from Columbia University and speaks Spanish.



A dark grey desk with various items: a spiral-bound notebook with lined pages in the top left, a black pencil with a pink eraser, a pair of black-rimmed glasses, and a silver pen in the bottom left.

### **I. Steven Goldstein - Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs**

I. Steven Goldstein of New York is the new Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Goldstein has been senior vice president at BP Global Solutions, a consulting firm in New York City, since 2012. He has served as a senior advisor to Winning Algorithms, a data science startup, and in his four-decade career has led communications, branding and social media efforts at several private sector companies. These include senior vice president and chief communications officer at Alliance Bernstein, executive vice president and chief communications officer at TIAA-CREF, and vice president of corporate communications at Dow Jones & Company, and assistant to the secretary and director of Public Affairs at the Department of the Interior. He earned a B.A. from the University of Arizona.

### **Rebecca E. Gonzales - U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho**

Rebecca E. Gonzales (SFS) of Texas is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. A diplomat since 1992, Gonzales was the chief of staff in the Bureau of Administration, and a management officer and senior Department official. She is known for leadership, crisis management skills and knowledge of Africa. She earned an M.S. from the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy at Fort McNair and an MBA and B.A. from The George Washington University. She speaks Spanish and Greek.

### **W. Robert Kohorst - U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia**

W. Robert Kohorst of California is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia. Kohorst is president and founder of Everest Properties, a commercial enterprise, in Pasadena, Calif., and a businessman with expertise in law, real estate and finance. He has contributed to public service organizations and educational institutions as director and chairman of the Young Presidents' Organization (San Gabriel Valley Chapter); regent of Loyola Marymount University; trustee of La Salle High School in Pasadena; and president of the Boy Scouts of America's San Gabriel Valley Council in Los Angeles. He earned a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School and a B.S. from the University of Dayton.

### **Jamie D. McCourt - U.S. Ambassador to the French Republic and Principality of Monaco**

Jamie D. McCourt of Maryland is the new U.S. Ambassador to the French Republic and Principality of Monaco. McCourt is the founder and CEO of Jamie Enterprises, and the former co-owner and executive of the Los Angeles Dodgers. She became the highest ranking female in Major League Baseball, appointed first as vice chairman of the Dodgers in 2004, then president in 2005 and finally CEO in 2009. Earlier in her career, McCourt was a practicing attorney, engaged in international and securities law in New York, as well as in corporate, real estate and family law in Boston. She then spent 10 years as vice president and general counsel of the McCourt Co., a family real estate development firm in Boston.



A dark, textured desk surface. In the top left corner, a portion of a lined notebook is visible with a pencil resting on it. Below the notebook, a pair of black-rimmed glasses lies diagonally. In the bottom left corner, the silver barrel of a pen is visible.

### **David D. Reimer - U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and to the Republic of Seychelles**

David D. Reimer (SFS) of Ohio is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and to the Republic of Seychelles. A diplomat since 1991, Reimer was the director of the Office of West African Affairs. A former DCM, he is known for his extensive knowledge of Africa and outstanding leadership, particularly in high-threat environments. He earned an M.P.I.A. from the University of Pittsburgh and a B.A. from Goshen College. He speaks French, Italian and German.

### **Carla Sands - U.S. Ambassador to Denmark**

Carla Sands of California is the new U.S. Ambassador to Denmark. Sands has been the chairman of Vintage Capital Group, LLC in Los Angeles a successful real estate firm since 2015. She is a leader in the nonprofit sector, working with organizations to improve the lives of children and the underprivileged and has served as a board member at Pepperdine University and on the boards of organizations supporting the arts and culture. She earned a Doctor of Chiropractic degree from Life Chiropractic College, Marietta, Ga.

### **Eric P. Whitaker - U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Niger**

Eric P. Whitaker (SFS) of Illinois is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Niger. A diplomat since 1990, Whitaker was acting deputy assistant secretary for East Africa and the Sudans. A two-time DCM, his diplomatic career has included consular, economic, commercial, political and refugee assignments. He has served at U.S. embassies in 11 African countries and was a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines. He earned an M.P.P. from Princeton University, an M.P.A. from the University of Pittsburgh, and an M.S. and B.S. from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He speaks French, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and Visayan.



LYING IN STATE:

**FIVE  
FALSEHOODS  
STATED AT  
STATE**

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
MIA SPINKLE-DIGZIT:

I DON'T WANT TO MAKE  
EXTRA WORK FOR ANYONE...



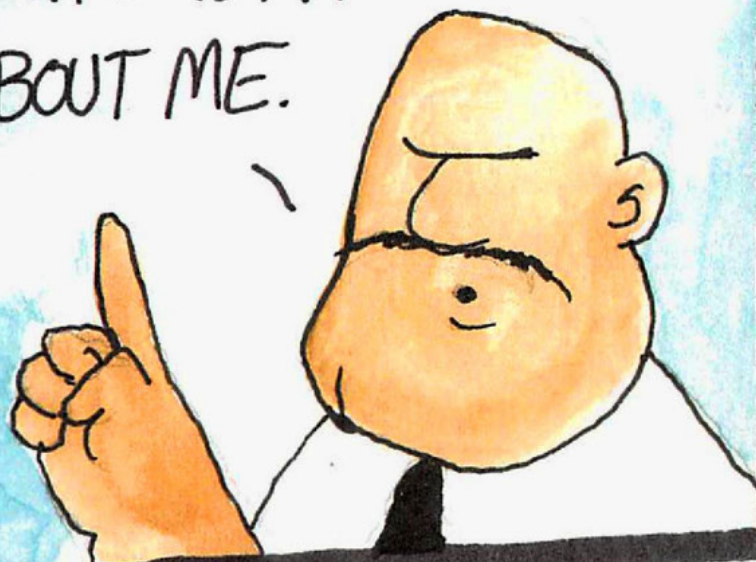
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER  
LEANN SWINDLE:

THAT ASSIGNMENT  
WILL BE  
REALLY  
CAREER-  
ENHANCING!



DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION LYLE  
KAGER:

THIS ISN'T  
ABOUT ME.



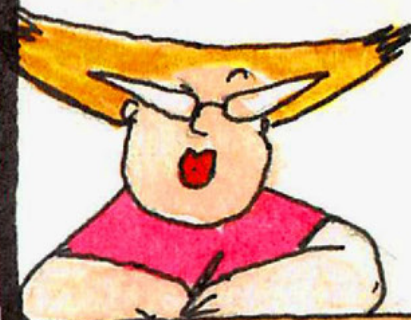
DEPUTY OFFICE DIRECTOR  
ROY PUNG:

I'M HERE TO HELP.



AMBASSADOR M. MYRON  
BUNKER:

MY DOOR  
IS ALWAYS  
OPEN.



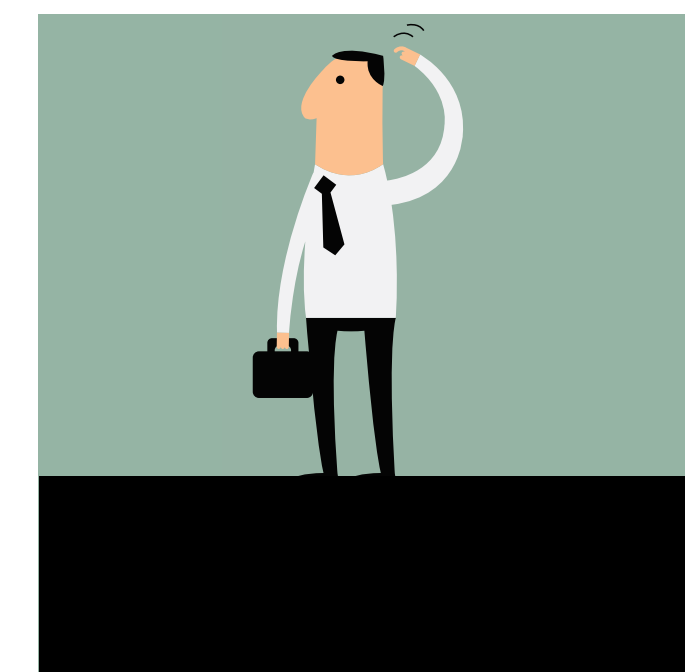


## American Jazz Singer Delights Minsk

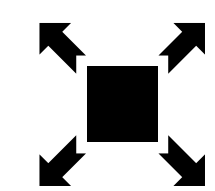


American jazz singer Deborah Carter, left, and the Belarusian band Apple Tea perform a song associated with Ella Fitzgerald, commemorating the 100th anniversary of America's "first lady of song." They performed at a full-house concert at the National Gorky Drama Theater in downtown Minsk Nov. 13. Carter also offered a vocal masterclass at a local university and an interactive lecture on Ella Fitzgerald's legacy, and spoke on a popular morning TV show. ■

*Photo by Yuri Dudinski*

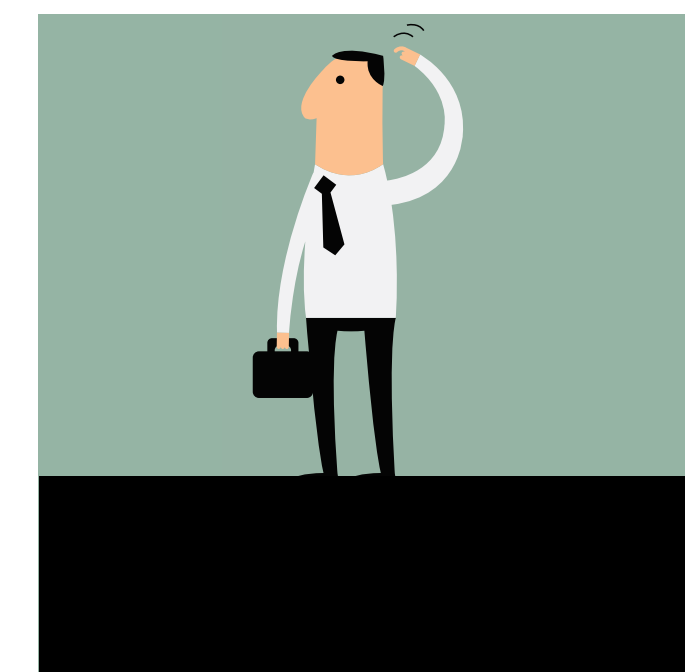


**TAP** Image  
to Read Story





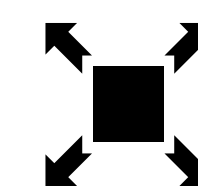
## Refugee Leadership Students Visit Mission Canada



Students from the Refugee Youth Leadership Program greet U.S. Consulate General Toronto's public affairs team in Mississauga, Ontario. The U.S. Mission in Canada funds the program, which supports refugee integration. Half of the residents in the greater Toronto area were born outside Canada, and the area is home to one out of four refugees residing in Canada. ■

*Photo by Madina Turdieva*

**TAP** Image  
to Read Story



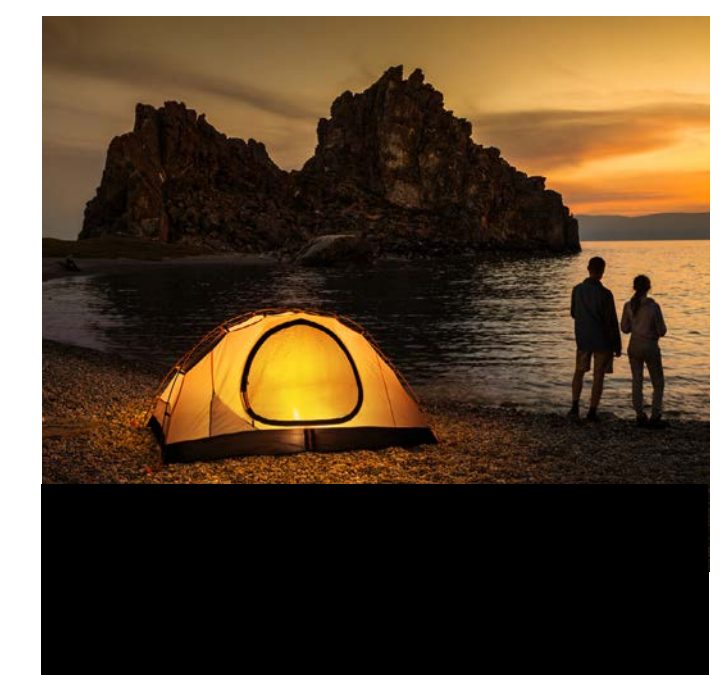
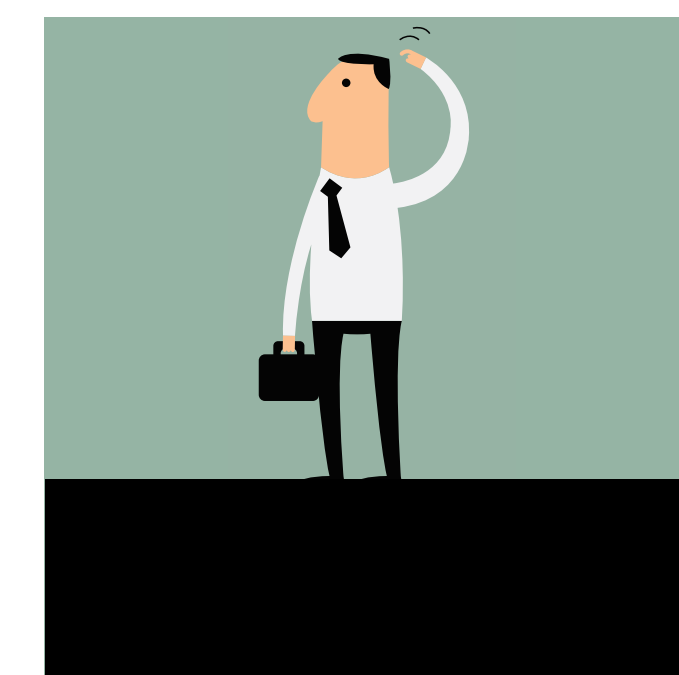


## Education Week Facebook Chat Held in Chile

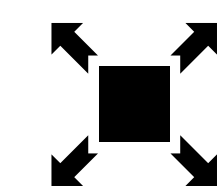


EducationUSA Chile Country Coordinator Brenda Paz Soldan, left, teams up with Vice Consul Stephanie Peterson to field questions on student visas and studying in the United States during a Facebook chat organized by U.S. Embassy Santiago during International Education Week. ■

*Photo by Anita Tvauri*



**TAP** Image  
to Read Story



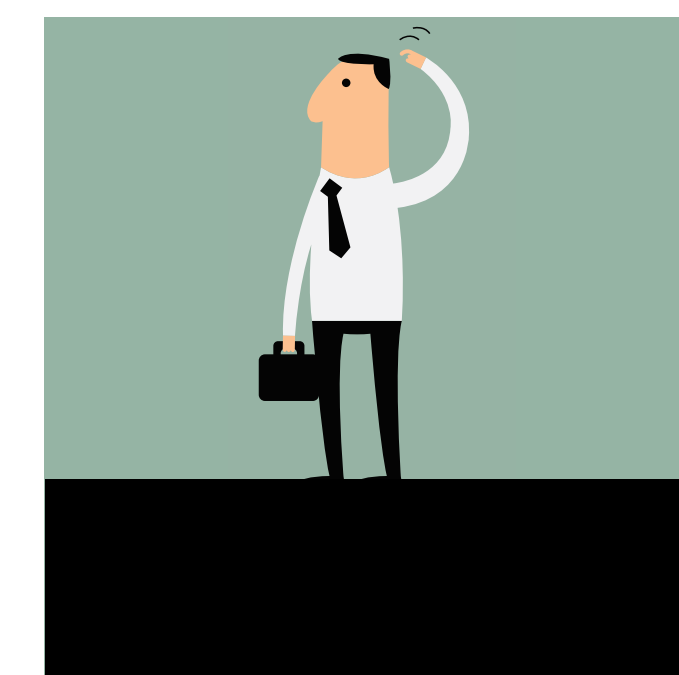


## Mission Celebrates Thanksgiving With Orphans

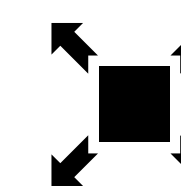


Daniel Mbugua, alumni coordinator for the AFS Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program in Mombasa, Kenya, greets guests at Embassy Nairobi's Thanksgiving celebration for more than 150 orphans and vulnerable children and their guardians. The embassy's Muslim outreach coordinator, Rukiya Mwinyi, and exchange program alumni also joined the children for the fair, which featured children's activities and helped the mission strengthen its ties with at-risk, marginalized populations in Kenya's majority-Muslim coastal region. ■

*Photo by Mohammad Jalalkhan*



**TAP** Image  
to Read Story



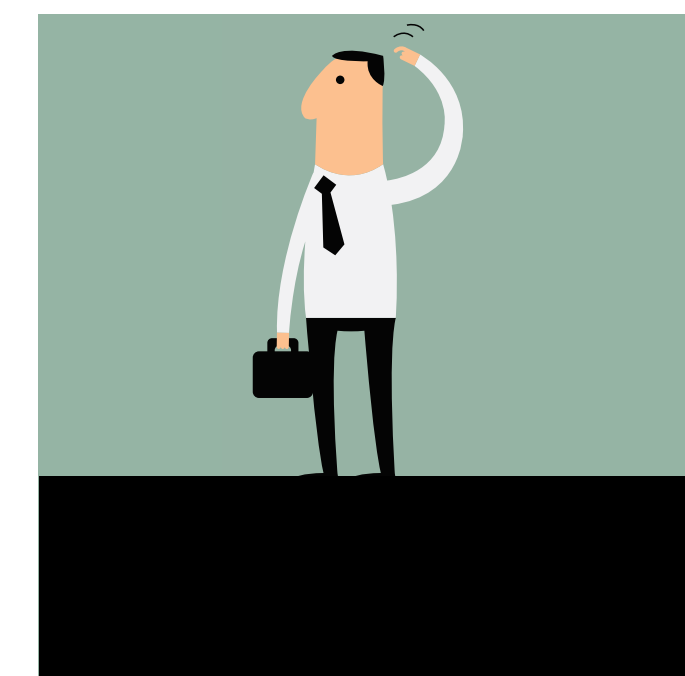


## Ethics Answers

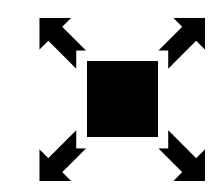
**Q:** I am an FSO and have written a fictional book based loosely on the life of King Arthur. Will government ethics rules prevent me from promoting the book or attending book signings?

**A:** Government ethics rules relating to book publishing and similar activities are complex, and they apply differently to career employees and noncareer employees such as political appointees. Political appointees such as ambassadors and other high-ranking Department officials are subject to restrictions that could prohibit them from collecting income for activities performed during government service. These could include book promotions, although affected individuals could collect royalties during government service for books written and published before they entered government service. High-ranking officials might also have entered into an ethics agreement at the time of their appointment and agreed to restrictions to avoid conflicts of interest and misuse of their position, out of an abundance of caution. Most career employees, however, have no outside-earned-income restriction but would need to worry about government ethics rules if their book was in any way tied to Department policies, programs or anything of concern to the Department. If you are contemplating writing such a book, please make sure you clear it with the Bureau of Public Affairs and reach out to the L/Ethics at [EthicsAttorneyMailbox@state.gov](mailto:EthicsAttorneyMailbox@state.gov).

*Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email [ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov](mailto:ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov)*



**TAP** Image  
to Read Story





## Retirements

### Civil Service

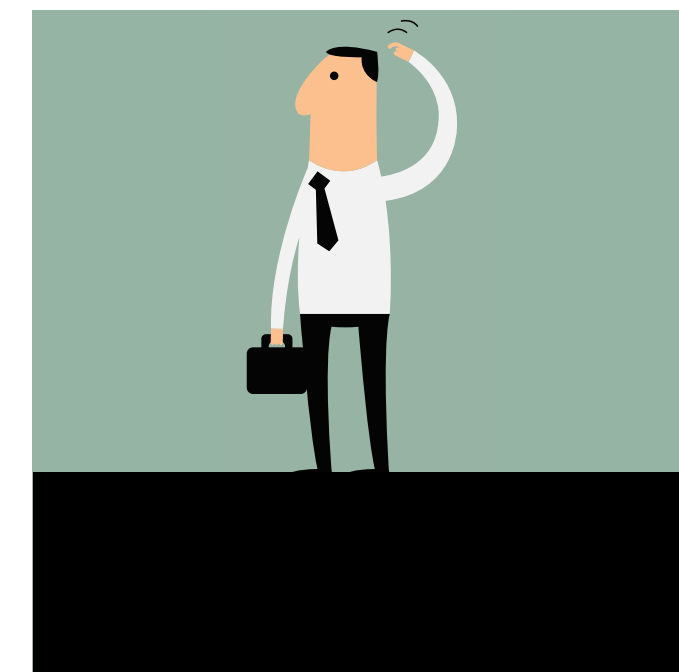
Frazier, Tracy L.  
Graves, Bernadette S.  
Gray, Derevia Yevette  
Holmes, Juanita Beatrice  
Jackson, Caesar Andre  
Maitland, Rogelio L.  
Pepin, Gerard D.  
Schneider III, Paul C.  
Smith, David F.  
Smith, Janice A.

### Foreign Service

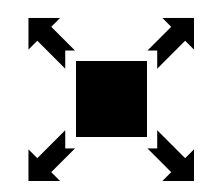
Abercrombie-Winstanley, G.  
Abrams, Stephen O.  
Bame, David J.  
Baum Jr., Russell Alton  
Bennett, Virginia Lynn  
Bryant, Craig P.  
Castro, Christian M.  
Cooke, Robin C.  
Cote, Janet A.

Dickmeyer, James C.  
Ebanks, Rohan L.  
Ebert, Kathleen M.  
Gallo, Thomas G.  
Godbee, Joseph  
Goodman, Walter E.  
Grant, William Kevin  
Hampson, John M.  
Haslach, Patricia  
Holmstrom, Todd C.  
Holst, Alan Rand  
Jacobson, Tracey Ann  
Karagiannis, Alexander  
Kleinwaks, Elise H.  
Kyna, X.  
Lee, Charles  
Llorens, Hugo  
Meaux, Michael P.  
Meininger, Laurie J.  
Messenger, Jane S.W.  
Miller, Janet B.

Miller, Janet Woodbury  
Osius III, Theodore G.  
Powers, Roberto  
Price, Richard C.  
Putz, Christine A.  
Ramadan, Virginia Sher  
Reed, Howard Verne  
Rezek, James M.  
Roxbury, Steven J.  
Sadousky, Robert A.  
Schellack, Rodney Lynn  
Schwartz, Larry  
Schwartz, Stephen M.  
Shorter, Elenita M  
Spaulding, Kenneth  
Townsend, Heather A.  
Vargas, Carol M.  
Walsh, Susan M.  
Whitaker, Nenita V.  
Wilson, Andrew Chester  
Witow, Jason



**TAP** Image  
to Read Story





# End State



A man arranges an offering of fruit at an altar in a Hindu temple in Ubud, Bali.

*Photo by Matthias Ripp*